

Bratz expands into virtual games with console debut

Bratz, the fashion doll brand, is extending into virtual gaming with the launch of a handheld games console called Miuchiz.

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Bratz, the fashion doll brand, is extending into virtual gaming with the launch of a handheld games console called Miuchiz.

The portable device will be targeted at young girls, and positioned between the lower-end traditional consoles and next-generation portable devices such as PlayStationPortable.

The move will see Bratz take on established gaming brands such as Nintendo, which has been increasingly targeting young girls with interactive games such as Animal Crossing.

Miuchiz, which is pronounced Mee-U-Cheese and is derived from the Japanese word for “friends”, will have infra-red and motion-sensor capabilities, and can be connected to the Web allowing users to play in a real-time virtual online world with other Miuchiz players. Users will be able to play games for points and win virtual currency, chat with other players and sell virtual items.

Emma Sherski, marketing director at Vivid Imaginations, which distributes the Bratz brand in the UK and Ireland, says it aims to provide a safe, fun online environment where Bratz fans can interact with each other. She adds/ “It illustrates the increasing convergence between the toy and games markets.”

Mattel, owner of Bratz rival Barbie, last week announced its move into gaming with the launch of HyperScan. The console will target the “tweenagers” market and will combine gaming and card collecting.

It will be launched in the US next month and is expected to be reach the UK next year, although there are no details as yet.

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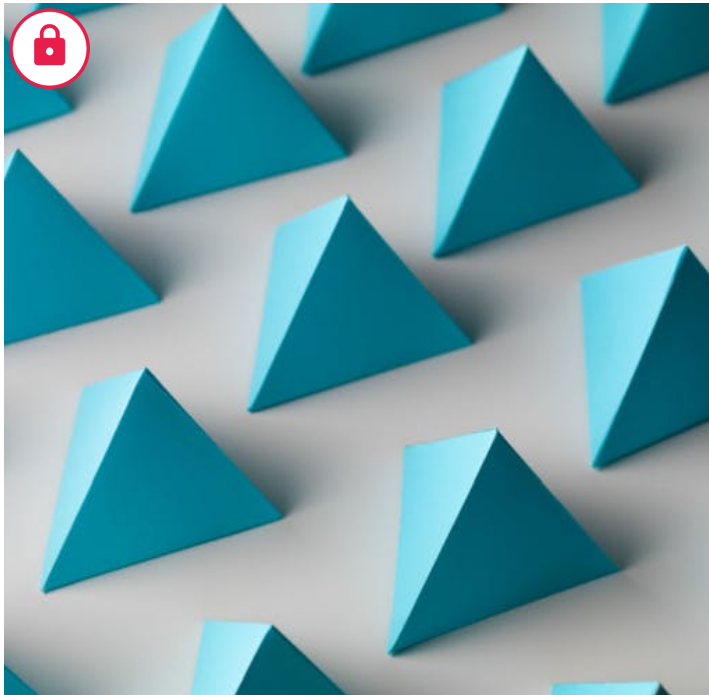
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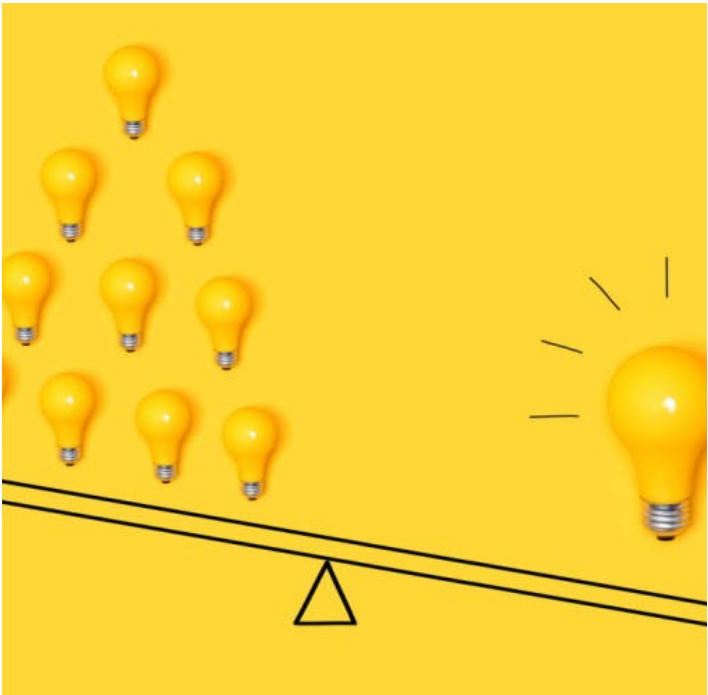
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